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November 8, 2017

Chairwoman Rhonda Schmidtlein
International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436

Dear Chairwoman Schmidtlein:

Thank you for your service as the Chairwoman of the International Trade Commission (ITC). We have also copied your fellow ITC Commissioners on this correspondence.

We are writing to you as part of larger effort to protect American users of imported hardwood plywood. We feel that the United States manufacturing industry and construction industry jobs are in danger because of a Petition filed at the U.S. ITC by a group of six plywood manufacturers against imports from China. As you know, the ITC held a hearing on this matter on October 26, 2017.

A broad cross-section of U.S. industries representing a large number of employees would be put at competitive risk if the ITC rules against plywood imports from China. The adverse effect of an affirmative determination in this case is so severe that it is being opposed by major U.S. trade associations, including the Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association, the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association, the International Wood Products Association, and the National Association of Home Builders.

As you know, this same matter was last decided by the ITC in 2013. At that time, it was dismissed by the ITC on grounds that included the fact that Chinese plywood and U.S plywood are physically different and are used in different applications. The ITC found, among other things, that the type of plywood had different properties than the U.S. product, U.S. producers cannot make that product (which is handmade) and there was no injury to the U.S. industry. This same group in 2017 has once again petitioned the ITC.

We are concerned that if the ITC votes in the affirmative in this case, massive new duties will be imposed on American users which will make their products uncompetitive. This ultimately would benefit companies that manufacture cabinets and other products in China, Thailand, Mexico, Vietnam and many other countries that utilize no American plywood and support no American jobs.

We appreciate your careful consideration of all of the arguments made in this case.

Sincerely,

C: David S. Johanson, Vice Chairman
Irving Williamson, Commissioner
Meredith Broadbent, Commissioner